

Regional News

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The number of health workers at the hospital is way below the recommended figure.

BY ROBERT ELEMA

Health officials at Yumbe Regional Referral Hospital have raised concern over persistent staffing shortages that continue to strain service delivery in the facility.

According to the hospital management, the facility is currently operating below the required staffing levels, forcing available personnel to work extended hours to meet the growing demand for health services.

The hospital serves 2.3 million people from Yumbe, Adjumani, Moyo, Obongi, Koboko districts. Some patients come from South Sudan and DR Congo.

Speaking to the *Daily Monitor* on Monday, the deputy director of the hospital, Dr Nasur Mubarak, said critical departments such as maternity, outpatient, laboratory, and emergency services are among the most affected.

"We are facing a significant staffing gap that affects the quality and speed of service delivery. Our staff are doing their best under challenging conditions, but more personnel are urgently needed," Dr Nasur said.

He added they started the facility with a staffing of about 9-10 percent and today, the staffing has improved to 18.8 percent, which is not enough.

"There is a lot of human resource crisis because of reduced funding. We have 235 staff out of the required 1,246, which

Yumbe hospital struggles to serve 2 million people



A nurse attends to a newly born baby at the Maternity Ward of Yumbe Hospital on Sunday. PHOTO/ROBERT ELEMA

is a very huge gap. Though there is a plan of recruiting health workers, we request partners to support us because the government processes take a little longer," he added.

District health authorities attributed the shortage of staff to delayed recruitment processes and the increasing population seeking care at the referral hospi-

tal, among others.

Dr Franklin Idi, the district health officer for Moyo, said the shortage of staff has also affected some of the lower health facilities in the region following the laying off

of the staff operating in refugee camps.

"We have refugees in this region but last year, the majority of the employees were laid off due to funding challenges and this created a lot of work for us in the government health facilities," he said.

"We are calling upon you (the government) to consider this region in wage enhancement so that we are able to recruit staff and actualise the new revised staffing norm," he added.

However, there is renewed hope as the government has included recruitment plans in the upcoming financial year budget.

Dr Michael Mwanga, the assistant commissioner for surveillance in the Ministry of Health, said the government is committed to improving the health services by allocating more resources to the health facilities.

He revealed that the government has allocated Shs6b for recruitment for Yumbe Regional Referral Hospital next financial year.

"We are aware that health facilities across the country are grappling with staffing gaps but there are hopes such challenges will be addressed," he said.

The Yumbe Deputy Resident Commissioner, Mr Mathew Vuyaya, said the facility should have the required amount of staff because it does not only serve Ugandans but also patients from neighbouring countries.

"For a place like this to accommodate only 18 percent of the staff, it is too low. The human resource needs to be enhanced," he said.



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